

Skokomish Watershed Action Team General Meeting  
December 4, 2009  
Skokomish Grange Hall, Shelton WA

Attendees (42 total):

Ross Gallagher - Mason County Commissioner  
Jayni Kamin and 2 sons - Skokomish Grange  
Mali and Allen Krivor - Skokomish Farms  
Shannon Skinner, Brad Power, Karen Ragan, Charles Toal - Valley residents  
Lydia Wagner - Washington Department of Ecology  
Rich Carlson - US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Marie Schacher - Backcountry Horsemen of Washington  
Sara Crumb - Congressman Norm Dicks  
Ron Gold - RG Forestry  
Bob Simmons - WSU extension  
Rich Geiger, Keith Dublanica, John Bolender - Mason Conservation District  
Patti Case, Rick Schmeling, Amber Mount - Green Diamond Resource Company  
Rebecca Wolfe - Cascade Chapter, Sierra Club  
Bob Dick - American Forest Resource Council  
Shelley Spalding - Olympic Forest Coalition  
Michael Marsh - Washington Native Plant Society  
Richard Brocksmith - Hood Canal Coordinating Council  
Mike Anderson - The Wilderness Society  
Kim Mueller and Carl Ward - WA State Dept. of Transportation  
Dusty Watz - JX Construction  
Billie Howard - Mason County Historical Society  
Nicole Hill - Cascade Land Conservancy  
Chris Sergeant - Tacoma Power  
Marco Pinchot - Taylor Shellfish Farms  
Joseph Pavel, Alex Gouley, Ron Figlar-Barnes - Skokomish Tribe  
Tiffany Royal - NW Indian Fisheries Commission  
Robin Stoddard, Dean Yoshina, Allen Gibbs - Forest Service

Introductions:

Jayni Kamin welcomed the group to the Skokomish Grange Hall and thanked those who have helped with the refurbishing work on the hall. After introductions, Mike Anderson said that the SWAT had certainly lived up to the "Action" part of its name this year. He reviewed the agenda, starting in the upper watershed, proceeding through the valley, and ending at the estuary and Hood Canal.

World Forestry Congress:

Robin Stoddard and Keith Dublanica showed pictures of their trip to the World Forestry Congress in Buenos Aires in October. The Skokomish was one of three restoration case studies

highlighted in the U.S. exhibit. On the last day of the Congress, Robin and Keith gave a joint presentation in a session about the Skokomish project.

### Olympic National Forest

Robin Stoddard reported that 20 miles of the 28.5 miles of road remediation work under contract in the Church-Brown-Steel Creek areas were completed this year, mostly by Ron Gold. Road stabilization and drainage upgrade work that was funded through an EPA grant to the Tribe was also completed this year by Dusty Watz. Work on replacing four trail bridges on the Skokomish River Trail also began this year and will be completed next summer. The Forest Service also began out-year planning on the remaining 56 miles of road remediation work contained in the SWAT 3-year Action Plan and expects to issue a final decision in January. A total of \$3.4 million – mostly from flood supplemental, ERFO, and Legacy Roads funding -- was spent on the South Fork this year. Robin distributed a Forest Service research monitoring report on the South Fork restoration work, which found that the road decommissioning resulted in an 80% reduction in sediment.

Dusty commented that he was able to do more culvert replacements and other road improvements this year in addition to the normal road maintenance. Ron said he was grateful that the South Fork road work allowed his business to weather the recession this year. Mike distributed copies of a Wilderness magazine article on “Green Jobs” written by Chris Dunagan that featured Ron’s restoration work.

Dean Yoshina said that design of phase one of the South Fork Large Wood Project was complete, the environmental assessment will be released in January, and implementation is expected next summer. Phase one will focus on parts of the river within the national forest, while the second phase will move to parts that are on Tacoma Power lands. The Forest Service is also beginning to plan a large thinning project in the South Fork and will be seeking early involvement by the SWAT and Tribe. Mike said that a SWAT sub-group including Bob Dick, Shelley Spalding, and Rebecca Wolfe would be working on the thinning plan and welcomed others to participate.

### Gibbons/McTaggart/Frigid Creek Fish Passage

Rick Schmeling showed slides of the Gibbons Creek project which was completed this fall with the help of several SWAT groups. Total cost of the project, which involved replacing an impassable culvert with a bridge, was \$267,000. Chris Sergeant showed slides of the completed McTaggart Creek stream restoration. Both projects held up well during the high-water event in November.

Rick said that Green Diamond is making plans for similar fish passage projects at two crossings of Frigid Creek on the same 2340 Road. One crossing (Big Horseshoe) would involve replacing a culvert with a bridge like Gibbons Creek. A bridge is not feasible at the other crossing (Little Horseshoe), but a bottomless culvert should be. Each project would cost about \$300,000. Green Diamond’s field biologist Amber Mount has walked Frigid Creek (tributary of McTaggart) and determined that it is potentially suitable habitat for anadromous fish. If funding is available, implementation is planned for summer of 2011.

### DC Report

Sara Crumb said that the Skokomish watershed continues to be a “huge priority” for Congressman Dicks. She said that Dicks included \$100 million for the Legacy Roads and Trails program in the FY 2010 House Interior appropriations bill and that the final bill had \$90 million. Mike noted that this was double the amount appropriated for Legacy Roads in the prior two years, which should translate into increased funding for the Skokomish next year. Also, Dicks helped secure \$50 million for Puget Sound Partnership and \$430,000 for the Skokomish General Investigation.

### Lunch, Skokomish Valley History, and Grange Award Presentation

Lunch was served in the Grange Hall, where participants were able to enjoy comfortable new chairs and a great view of the valley through the large, clean windows. Lifelong Skokomish Valley resident Karen Ragan was in charge of the kitchen operations, and food was provided by Green Diamond (sandwiches and cookies), Rebecca Wolfe (chili), Allen Gibbs (spaghetti), Skokomish Grange (coffee, tea, etc.), and Ron Gold (ice cream).

During lunch, Billie Howard gave an interesting talk about the settlement of the Skokomish Valley during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. She noted the strong agricultural roots, tradition of political activism, and multi-generational family ties in the valley.

Afterwards, Billie presented the SWAT with a certificate of appreciation from the Skokomish Grange for service to the community. Mike gratefully accepted the award on behalf of the SWAT. Bob Dick expressed his appreciation for Mike’s ability to work with him and others in a successful, collaborative approach, organizing and encouraging the efforts of the SWAT. The group gathered in front of the Grange Hall for photographs. Also, Patti Case announced that Green Diamond was donating all of the \$150 in lunch donations to the Skokomish Grange to help pay for renovation of the hall.

### General Investigation

Rich Geiger reported that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board was expected to approve the \$430,000 non-federal match for the Skokomish General Investigation. This means that a total of \$1.9 million has now been raised for the G.I. and that just \$200,000 remains of the original budget. Additional money may need to be raised to cover the G.I.’s expansion into the North Fork. The Corps expects to complete the baseline/existing conditions report in July 2010, at which point it will begin to develop a list of potential projects in consultation with local landowners. Starting in March, landowners adjacent to the river will be asked to give the Corps a temporary a right of entry to their property in order to conduct cultural surveys along the river bank. There was considerable discussion of the GI which produced several suggestions including the following:

- Landowners should receive a narrative explaining the need for and limited nature of the Corps access.
- The Corps should have an Action Plan like the SWAT.
- The Corps should hold a meeting in the Valley before March.
- The Corps needs to have a “face” in the Valley who meets with individual landowners.
- The Corps should meet with and become involved in the SWAT.

### Purdy Creek Bridge

Kim Mueller showed slides of the Purdy Creek Bridge project, which was completed this summer on schedule and within the \$15 million budget. The reconstruction project raised the height of the bridge by 12.5 feet and tripled its length. Work progressed even through the flooding and snow last winter. A significant amount of unanticipated artesian spring groundwater had to be removed from the project site in order to complete the bridge approaches. Last month's flood probably would have closed Highway 101 due to water flowing over the road near the old bridge, but the new bridge was able to accommodate the floodwaters.

### East Bourgault and River Road

Ron Figlar-Barnes showed a video of some successful restoration work that the Tribe and the WA Department of Transportation accomplished this summer and fall in the lower watershed, east of Hwy. 101. As mitigation for the Purdy Creek project, the DOT removed an old bridge and pavement on East Bourgault Road. The Tribe also contracted with Ron Gold to restore some of the River Road to wetland and salmon habitat. These projects produced quick and exciting results, as salmon began to spawn in the restored channels this fall. Ron thinks that more of this work could be done in the lower watershed.

### Skokomish Estuary

Rich Geiger said that Phase II of the Skokomish Estuary restoration is planned for next summer. The \$2.9 million project has been funded with \$1.2 million from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and 1.7 million from the Puget Sound Partnership's acquisition and restoration program. The project will remove 2.4 miles of dike from the perimeter of Nalley Island, which is expected to reduce the build-up of silt in the estuary, improve habitat for shellfish, and thereby help solve the dissolved oxygen problem in Hood Canal. The major challenge will be to complete the work within the short operating window that is currently expected to start on July 15. A 205-foot temporary access bridge will be needed to remove 90,000 cubic feet of excavated fill from the island.

### Partial list of upcoming SWAT events, activities, and opportunities:

#### December:

- Anticipated SRFB approval of Skokomish G.I. funding
- Possible FERC approval of Cushman re-licensing

#### January:

- Steering Committee, Jan. 6, 9:00 AM
- South Fork Large Wood environmental assessment released for public comment.
- Decision Notice on South Fork Roads Remediation environmental assessment
- Possible SWAT meetings with Congressman Dicks and Senators' staff
- Possible SWAT sub-group meeting on South Fork timber planning

#### February:

- Steering Committee, Feb. 3, 9:00 AM
- Legacy Roads and Trails proposals for 2010 submitted to Region 6
- Possible SWAT meeting with Corps

#### March:

- Steering Committee, March 3, 9:00 AM
- Valley landowners begin to provide right-of-entry for G.I. cultural surveys

April:

- Steering Committee, April 7, 9:00 AM
- House Interior Appropriations hearing
- Possible SWAT field trip

May:

- Steering Committee, May 5, 9:00 AM
- SWAT General Meeting